

www.gspcmobile.org * (251)432-1749 * 300 Government Street, Mobile, Alabama 36602

Souper Bowl Sunday

by Kara Olson, Director of Youth & CE

We know who is playing in the Super Bowl on February 1st. Some of us know where we will watch the game, and some of us might not care about the game! I hope some of you may also be thinking, "I've heard of something a little different that happens on Super Bowl Sunday."



It is SOUPER Bowl Sunday. It was started by a group of teens who wanted to make the fellowship of Super Bowl weekend about more than a game; they extended their spirit of fellowship to the larger community.

GSPC has been participating in Souper Bowl Sunday for several years, and past GSPC offerings have gone to the Bay Area Food Bank. That is the plan again for this year. The Food Bank supplies many people along the Gulf Coast with meals, and it's also where GSPC gets some of the food for Coffee Club.

Below is a story I wrote about a morning at GSPC Coffee Club, where I serve on Thursdays. This story happened several months ago and I wrote it on my Internet blog because it impacted me so much and I wanted to share it. Stories like this are what keep me coming to serve Coffee Club, and inspire me to give what I am able to help those who are less fortunate than me. I hope on Sunday February 1 you will bring a little extra money to contribute to the special Souper Bowl offering at the end of worship. My blog:

I stayed up until 2 a.m. last night watching the debates and fooling around on my computer. I usually get up to go to Coffee Club by 6:45, my alarm goes off at 5:45, so I only had 3 3/4 hours of sleep. I hit snooze until 6:50, but honestly, no matter how much sleep I get, getting out of bed to go to Coffee Club is a hard thing for me! Always! Every week! But I do it and here is why:

It's 7:15 at the church. I drink my first cup of coffee, talk with the other volunteers, and then take my position behind the peaches, yes, I am the fruit girl! The guests come in and stand in line. One of us welcomes them and asks for someone to say the prayer. This is often an interesting time because one of three things happens: 1) You can't hear them at all and then everyone says AMEN, 2) Someone is really into their prayer—insists that all the men remove their hats—won't begin until they do—and then does an AMAZING prayer that lasts for awhile or 3) Someone does a "Thank you for this food" prayer. Today scenario #1 happened, and we began serving.

People start coming through the line, and I greet them with *Good Morning* and smile. Now, here comes the part that makes Coffee Club-Coffee Club, and why I keep coming no matter how hard it is to get up.

When I smile and say *Good Morning* sometimes they smile

back, other times they don't say anything, but sometimes they ask me how I am and I'll say "great," and out of habit I say, "how are you?" The first time I asked this I kind of died inside. I just asked a person who likely slept on the ground, was woken up when the sun came up (and probably many times during the night), was probably cold, uncomfortable, and incredibly hungry, how they were? The answer was, "Blessed, I am so blessed. Thankful that the Lord woke me up today. I'm making it, thanks to the Lord."

And I am complaining because I have to get up at 6:45 from my nice cozy bed, wander into my dressing room to get ready, choose from many clothes, and use a fully functioning bathroom with a warm shower. I mean, come on Kara! And you know what Coffee Club guests say to me? "Thanks for coming out and serving us! Have a blessed day!"

Sometimes you get someone who is mean, or says nothing, or say they feel horrible, but that really is atypical. They have bad days too, just like all of us. What I most often see and hear is that many of these people have more faith than I have; they trust in God, and it shows.

Sometimes someone comes in and while they are walking by the piano will pluck out a little something. It is rarely good. This morning a guy sat down and started playing. At first he wasn't good, just plucking some stuff out, but he was just warming up. He played a song I know, and then he started playing this really jazzy song. Then he started singing to it (chorus) "That's Why I'm Praisin' Him, Praisin' Him" (verses: Amazing Grace) all to this really jazzy tune he was playing. It completely changed the room. People were tapping their feet and smiling at him. People also started to gather around the piano. When he was finished, another older gentleman played two amazing classical pieces.

It makes me wonder who the people we serve are and where they came from. I mean the last guy who played classical pieces obviously had some training, and probably the first guy too. What is their story? Why are they now eating free breakfast at a church? Yes, there are drug addicts and alcoholics, but that is a small portion of whom we serve. These people work hard. You can see it in their faces, in their rough hands and tired eyes. There is a woman who comes in late every morning, in scrubs. I don't know exactly what she does, but we saw her walking in right at 8 one day, so we saved the last egg for her, and someone standing in the seconds line was complaining about it, and I heard Mama say "she works 3 jobs, she deserves to eat."

So, Thursday mornings I do feel like I can change the world; even if it is with just a smile and a scoop of peaches. And they really do change me, so, "that's why I'm praisin' him, praisin' him. Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see. That's why I'm praisin' him."

Attention GSPC WWII Veterans!

Honor Flight South Alabama (HFSA) is a non-profit program established to recognize and honor the tremendous service and sacrifices of America's "Greatest Generation," our World War II (WWII) Veterans. **HFSA will fly these American heroes to Washington, DC, to visit and reflect at their memorial at NO COST.** With most in their 80s, we are losing WW II veterans every day, so our mission is urgent. Many WWII Veterans have financial or medical challenges in making a trip to the nation's Capitol.

Honor Flight South Alabama removes any obstacles by providing the following:

- a charter plane fully staffed with medical professionals and equipment
- volunteer "Guardians" to accompany and assist each Veteran
- every WWII Veteran travels absolutely free

Participants will leave out of Mobile May 6th, 2009.

For more information visit www.honorflightsa.com
To request an information packet and/or applications please call: 251-431-8621 or email
[email: support@honorflightsa.com](mailto:support@honorflightsa.com)

Mail to:

Honor Flight South Alabama
Mobile Area Veterans Day Commission
P.O. Box 2187 Mobile, AL 36652-2187

"Chocolates for Calvin."

Swiss chocolatier Blaise Poyet has created special chocolate pralines to mark the 500th anniversary of the Protestant reformer John Calvin. Noting Calvin's emphasis on the glory and perfection of God, Poyet says he "chose a chocolate that we chocolatiers find exceptional, rare, and flawless."

Visit www.pres-outlook.com for more information.

Note cards & Prints of the GSPC Watercolor



The Mission Committee received from Jerome Fisher, the artist of the watercolor painting in the foyer, 20 ~ 16 x 20 print reproductions with certificates of authenticity of the work and several hundred note cards that are now available for purchase.

Autographed print can be purchased for \$100. Note cards are available for \$1 each. **Proceeds from the sales will be donated to two world Presbyterian missions: the work of Frank & Nancy Dimmock in Lesotho, and to the work of Dan & Elizabeth Turk in Madagascar.**

Christian Education

**Save the Date! Women's Retreat at Baytreat
March 27 & 28th**

PYC ~ Kara Olson, Director of Youth & CE

- SUNDAY SCHOOL this Sunday!! Junior and Senior Highs are continuing to explore Genesis!
- Come for some fun Bowling this Sunday night the 25th at Florida Lanes! Bring \$5! Pizza and drinks provided!! (please meet there)
- PYC will be hosting a Valentine's party for the L'Arche community on February 8th!! If you have ideas for games or want to contribute anything for the party, please contact Kara.

Amanda Murray, Director of Children's Ministries

- The children are continuing to raise money and awareness for the **Ministry of Hope Crisis Nursery**. Please support their mission.
- Nursery will be provided for the Homecoming Luncheon this Sunday Noon, January 25.
- Amanda will be out of the office January 26th to February 1st. She will be participating in the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators in San Antonio, Texas.

Single Parenting Support Group

The Single Parenting Support Group is a new support group facilitated by Shelley Collins, MS ALC; a single parent herself. Shelley lost her husband, Lattie Collins, when her daughter was six months old and is very excited to be sharing this ministry with our community. Shelley was raised at GSPC and married Lattie an intern at GSPC at the time.

The group will meet the first and third Monday of every month at Christ Episcopal Church. Meetings will last from 6:00 until 7:00 p.m. Refreshments will be offered. Childcare is provided as well. The hope is to create a supportive atmosphere for the most challenging career choice one can make, and now often times managed by a single parent.

The Single Parenting Support Group will also acknowledge the presence of God in this job and share ways in which we are not "single". We are not alone, and we are a member of the body of Christ. Together in this knowledge we hope to further the experience of joy in our families, even in the tough often lonely job of single parenting.

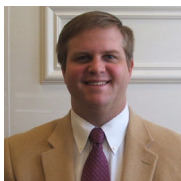
There is a \$10 monthly fee paid for months attended only. The fee goes to a charity of the groups' choice.

For more information please contact Shelley Collins at shelley2763@comcast.net or call 251-479-4921.

Congregational Life

Meet Our Newest Members

by Denise Lamby



John Browning

John was born in Mobile, but grew up in Montgomery. He moved back to Mobile after law school in 2003.

He decided to join GSPC after marrying long time member, Margaret Sue Helmsing. He also “very much enjoys the service mission of the church and Men’s Bible Study on Wednesday mornings.”

John is an attorney at Burr & Forman, LLP. He graduated from Troy State University in Political Science, with minors in Business and History. He attended Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham. Outside of church and work, John loves to golf, deer hunt and watch college football.

GOVERNMENT STREET LUNCH FORUM

Thursdays Noon to 1 PM
in Fellowship Hall, Lunch—\$5

January 29: Dr. Semoon Chang

Dr. Chang received a B.A. from Seoul National University - Korea, a M.A. from Southern Illinois University, and a Ph.D. from Florida State University. He is the Director for the Center for Business and Economic Research.

Dr. Chang teaches Principles of Macroeconomics, Principles of Microeconomics, and Managerial Economics (undergraduate and graduate). His research interests are in the areas of applied economics and microeconomic theory.

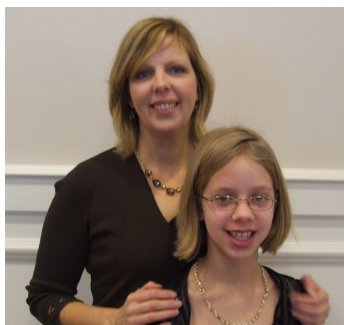
Next Thursday, February 5

Thomas Davis, Jr., Executive Director of the Community Foundation of Alabama

New Members received January 18, 2009



Dr. Scott and Elizabeth Markle
205 S. Georgia Avenue
Mobile, Alabama 36604
251-391-6620



Mary Harris and daughter,
Shanon Harris
60 S. Georgia Avenue
Mobile, Alabama 36604
251-300-8646

Honor your loved one with a Sunday Sanctuary Flower arrangement. Contact Sara Bryan, 471-1036, to reserve a date. February 1, 8 and 22 are currently available.

“Everybody can be great . . . because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Lectionary Readings for

January 25:

Jon. 3:1-5, 10;
Ps. 62:5-12;
1 Cor. 7:29-31;
Mark 1:14-20

Urban Ministry

Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN)/ Family Promise

GSPC will host IHN the week of **March 22-28**. We need 98 volunteers in order to fill all the necessary slots and make the week a success. Volunteers are needed for:

- Set Up & Clean Up
- Evening Hosts
- Laundry
- Meals
- Overnight Hosts

Please contact **Michon Trent** at (251) 432-4264 or call the church office at (251) 432-1749.

IN OUR PRAYERS AT NURSING HOMES AND IN THE HOSPITAL

Allen Memorial: Mary Marvin Anderson and Maria Marbus

Somerby of W. Mobile: Kitty Harris

Gordon Oaks: Thyrsa Jones (rm 239), Harriet Norville (rm 241) and Warren Norville (rm 27)

Westminster Village: Ben Hutson (rm 562)

Cogburn (Dauphin Con.): Winnie Counts, and David and Betty Mechler

Mobile Infirmary West: Blair Newman

GREEN NEWSLETTER OPTION NOW AVAILABLE!

The office staff of GSPC would like to offer an on-line version of this weekly newsletter to those of you who would prefer an e-mailed version instead of a paper copy.

Please e-mail:

laura@gspcmobile.org if you would like to make this change.

Thank you!



The Presbytery Meeting at GSPC—Feb 27 and Feb 28

GSPC will host the Presbytery of South Alabama Meeting on February 27, 28, 2009. Ryan Jensen will be examined at this meeting before his ordination on Sunday, March 1. If you can help in any of the following areas, please fill in the sign up sheet with your name and the task(s) you would enjoy doing, and return the slip to the office, Dot White, or M.R. Andrews.

SET UP: Friday, Feb. 27, 10:30 AM—set up for evening dinner and decorate tables, rooms for small group meetings (Bibles, pens, paper) and registration area

REGISTRATION Friday late afternoon: Five people needed to manage registration tables

GREETERS for *Friday evening and Saturday*

USHERS for Worship Services Friday Evening and Saturday: Sanctuary preparation & ushering during the services

CLEAN UP AND SET UP FOR SATURDAY after dinner Friday evening: laundry of tablecloths, set up for continental breakfast Saturday morning

SOUND SYSTEM personnel for both worship services and the general meeting

SET UP FOR NOON LUNCHEON Saturday mid-morning

CLEAN UP AND SET UP Saturday afternoon: clean up of Fellowship Hall and rooms used for small group meetings, reset for Congregational Lunch on Sunday, March 1

Name _____ Phone _____

I will help with: _____
